

Message Text

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41

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1184

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT MORESBY 0087

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EWWT, PP

SUBJ: POSSIBILITY THAT FARRELL LINES OR PHEL WILL PROVIDE
DIRECT SERVICES TO PORT MORESBY

REF: A. 75 PORT MORESBY 1092 B. 75 STATE 3110633

1. EMBASSY HAS DISCUSSED THE QUESTION AND DESIRABILITY OF
DIRECT AMERICAN SERVICE TO PORT MORESBY FROM THE U.S. WEST
COAST WITH DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS AND TRADE OFFICIALS
AND LOCAL BUSINESSMEN HERE. THERE IS NO QUESTION AS TO
DESIRABILITY OF SUCH A SERVICE, BUT AS STATED REFTEL B THE
PROBLEM LIES WITH COMMERCIAL VIABILITY.

2. PRESENTLY, THE ONLY COMMODITY IN THE PORT MORESBY AREA
WHICH CAN GENERATE SUFFICIENT TONNAGE TO MEET MINIMUM EXPORT
REQUIREMENTS (AND EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT 500 TONS MENTIONED
REFTEL B IS NOT A DEFINITE FIGURE), WOULD BE SOFTWOOD TIMBER.
ECONOFF CONTACTED LARGEST TIMBER EXPORTER IN PORT MORESBY
AREA, ANG TIMBERS LTD., AND HELD SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH
SALES MANAGER, HOWARD NAIRN. NAIRN SAID THAT HE COULD GUARANTEE
AVAILABILITY OF 250,000 SUPERFEET OF TIMBER (WEIGHING APPROXIMATELY
500 TONS) EVERY FORTY DAYS. ANG TIMBERS NOW EXPORTS
TO AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND (ON OCCASION) THE PRC.

3. SOFTWOOD TIMBER COMES IN SEVERAL SPECIES SUITABLE FOR USE
AS 1) INTERNAL FURNISHINGS SUCH AS MOULDINGS, 2) FURNITURE,
3) DOORS AND 4) "FEATURE" WALLS, ETC. TIMBER CAN EITHER BE
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SHIPPED AS FLITCHES OR STANDARD GRADE SAWN DAR (DRESSED ALL

ROUND). IT IS TREATED FOR INSECTS WITH BORON IN DIP-DIFFUSED METHOD, SEALED FOR TWENTY-ONE DAYS AND SHIPPED IN "SHIPPING DRY" STATE. IF STANDARD GRADE SAWN REQUIRED, WOOD IS SHIPPED IN BUNDLES TWO FEET BY TWO FEET IN LENGTHS RANGING FROM SEVEN TO TWENTY-ONE FEET, AVERAGING FIFTEEN FEET. MOISTURE CONTENT IS 12 PERCENT.

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES THIS IS BEST BET FOR OPENING PORT MORESBY TO AMERICAN COMMERCIAL SHIPPING ON REGULAR BASIS. WE BELIEVE ONCE REGULAR SHIPPING LINK ESTABLISHED OTHER BUSINESSMEN WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SERVICE AND WIDE RANGE OF U.S. PRODUCTS WILL BECOME AVAILABLE IN PORT MORESBY AND SURROUNDING AREA WHICH IS SINGLE LARGEST MARKET IN PNG.

5. GIVEN VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THIS SHIPPING LINK TO "OPEN UP" SOUTH COAST OF PNG, EMBASSY WOULD LIKE DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE AND STATE TO MAKE STRENUOUS EFFORT TO LOCATE U.S. WEST COAST BUYERS INTERESTED IN PURCHASING PNG SOFTWOOD. ESTABLISHMENT OF LINK COULD BE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT U.S. COMMERCIAL ACTION FOR NEXT SEVERAL YEARS.

6. EMBASSY HAS CONSIDERABLY MORE DETAIL ON SOFTWOOD AVAILABLE, DENSITY, ELASTICITY, CRUSHING STRENGTH, ETC. IF NEEDED. WE ARE ALSO PREPARED TO PROVIDE SAMPLES TO INTERESTED BUYERS IF NECESSARY.

7. DECONTROL ON RECEIPT.
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